

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT



Application No. 14501 of 1600 New York Avenue Corporation, pursuant to Sub-section 8207.2 of the Zoning Regulations, for a special exception under Sub-section 7203.6 to allow a reduction (less than 25 percent) in the number of parking spaces required for nonresidential uses in a proposed alteration to an existing hotel (Econo Lodge) from 136 rooms to 156 rooms in a M District at premises 1600 New York Avenue, N.E., (Square 4102, Lot 248).

HEARING DATE: November 12, 1986

DECISION DATE: November 12, 1986 (Bench Decision)

FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. The property is located on the north side of New York Avenue west of the Amtrak spur line and east of Bladensburg Road and is known as premises 1600 New York Avenue, N.E. It is zoned M.

2. The property is irregularly shaped with a frontage of approximately 1,040 feet along New York Avenue and a depth ranging from approximately 157 feet on the east to approximately thirty feet on the west, with varying depths throughout the site. The site contains approximately 33,000 square feet of land area.

3. The site is currently improved with a seven-story Econo-Lodge Hotel containing 136 guest rooms. One hundred twenty-seven parking spaces are provided on the site. The use of the premises as a hotel is permitted as a matter-of-right in the M District.

4. The applicant proposes to construct twenty additional guest rooms on the second floor of the existing structure. The second floor of the structure is currently developed as an open parking deck with five stories of guest rooms above. The proposed addition will eliminate the parking spaces currently provided on the second floor parking deck.

5. The applicant has acquired a narrow strip of property, which was previously improved with a gas station, to the immediate west of the hotel. That portion of the subject site has been paved to provide ten parking spaces.

6. The applicant is seeking special exception relief pursuant to Paragraph 7203.61, which gives the Board jurisdiction to reduce the amount of required parking spaces by up to twenty-five percent. The Board is required to give consideration to:

- a. The nature and location of the structure;
- b. The maximum number of students, employees, guests, customers, or clients who can reasonably be expected to use the proposed building or structure at one time;
- c. The amount of traffic congestion existing or which the building or structure can reasonably be expected to create in the neighborhood;
- d. The quantity of existing public, commercial, or private parking, other than curb parking, on the property or in the neighborhood which can reasonably be expected to be available when the building or structure is in use; and,
- e. The proximity to public transportation, particularly Metrorail stations, and the availability of public transportation service in the area, or a ride-sharing program approved by the District of Columbia Department of Public Works.

7. The site faces New York Avenue which is a major east-west thoroughfare for both commuters and tourists. New York Avenue is a six-lane major arterial divided by a concrete median and carries approximately 60,000 vehicles on an average day. No parking is permitted on either side of the street.

8. The area immediately surrounding the subject site is developed with general industrial uses and several hotels.

9. The proposed addition of 20 rooms to the hotel requires special exception relief to reduce the number of parking spaces required from 156 to 113. This represents a 24.7 percent reduction which is within the 25 percent standard established by Paragraph 7203.61.

10. The hotel manager testified that the additional rooms are needed because the hotel operates at 90 percent capacity all year round. He further testified that the hotel provides comfortable rooms, at affordable rates, and is used primarily by tourists who make up fully 80 percent of the guests.

11. The hotel manager stated that the majority of the hotel guests arrive by car or chartered buses. At least forty percent of the hotel's guests arrive by chartered bus. Approximately 20 percent of the hotel's guests arrive in the city by plane or train and use taxi service to arrive at the hotel. No dining facilities or meeting rooms are provided at this facility. During the manager's two years of experience at the subject hotel, he has never received a complaint as to parking problems.

12. The hotel employs approximately fifty-three persons, no more than twenty-five of which are at the site at a given time. The majority of the hotel employees come to the site via public transportation. The manager testified that three or four employees park at the site during the day and that generally no employees park at the site at night.

13. The site is well served by public transportation. There are five Metro bus lines which terminate at 16th Street and New York Avenue.

14. The traffic engineer testified that the current peak hour operating conditions at the nearest street intersection of 16th Street and New York Avenue, N.E. indicate a B level of service. At the intersection of New York and Montana Avenues, approximately sixty feet to the east, the peak hour level of service is D.

15. The traffic engineer testified that the traffic generated by the additional twenty rooms is likely to be insignificant. First, a substantial percentage of the hotel's guests arrive by charter bus. This minimizes both the traffic generation impact and the hotel's parking demands. In addition, a large percent of the hotel's guest stop on impulse; that is, they make the decision to stop for the night when they see the hotel. These people do not represent new trips since they are already on the road. Further, the largest proportion of guests arrive from the east, traveling westbound on New York Avenue. They arrive in the evening when the eastbound traffic has much heavier volume. The guests do not contribute to peak traffic conditions. In the morning, the guests going west to the center of the city generally leave after the peak hour. Those guests leaving town head east, again in the opposite direction of traffic. The Board finds that the proposed addition would have no impact on the morning or evening peak hour conditions and no adverse impact on neighborhood traffic congestion.

16. The traffic engineer testified, and the Board finds, that the parking is adequate. The hotel will provide parking for 113 cars. In addition, and as recognized by the Board in Order No. 13663, to the west of the hotel across

16th Street there is a free, paved and marked parking lot owned by the District of Columbia.

17. The traffic engineer testified that the charter buses generally unload passengers in front of the hotel and then leave the site. However, when the buses remain on the premises there is adequate parking space available either in the one designated bus parking space in front of the hotel or in empty parking spaces in the lot.

18. By memorandum dated November 3, 1986, the Department of Public Works reported that the proposed reduction in parking would not negatively impact the surrounding neighborhood. The DPW estimated that parking demand would create a need for 104 spaces on the site. The applicant is providing 113 on-site parking spaces. The DPW also noted that access to the site will be through existing curb cuts.

19. DPW recommended that the applicant provide one twelve foot by thirty foot loading berth and one ten foot by twenty foot service/delivery space. The Board notes that the applicant is not seeking any zoning relief relative to loading requirements, therefore, the DPW recommendation is not technically a part of the case before the Board.

20. In an effort to address the DPW recommendation, the applicant increased the size of the existing loading space from ten feet by twenty feet to twelve feet by twenty-five feet. The architect testified that the size and configuration of the site precludes the provision of additional loading area without further reducing the number of parking spaces provided on the site.

21. By letter dated October 18, 1986, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 5B recommended that the application be approved. The ANC was of the opinion that the applicant is a significant contributor to the revitalization of the New York Avenue N.E. Corridor and cites an increasing need for affordable overnight lodging as provided by the applicant.

22. The record contains one letter of opposition from the manager of the Budget Motor Inn, across New York Avenue from the subject premises. The opposition was based on past operation of a cocktail lounge with entertainment at the subject site by previous owners. When the lounge was in operation, overflow parking was generated and adversely impacted the parking provided at the Budget Motor Inn. The Board notes that the applicant is not providing dining or meeting room facilities at the subject premises which might generate the type of parking situation which existed in the past.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND OPINION:

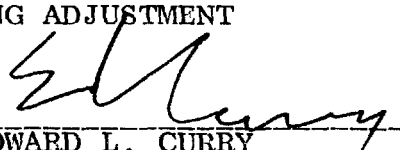
Based on the foregoing findings of fact and the evidence of record, the Board concludes that the applicant is seeking a special exception. In order to be granted such relief the applicant must demonstrate compliance with the requirements of Paragraph 7203.61 and that the requested relief can be granted pursuant to Sub-section 8207.2 as in harmony with the Zoning Regulations. The Board concludes that the applicant has met the required burden of proof. The nature and location of the structure is in keeping with existing development in the New York Avenue Corridor. The number of employees and guests will not be substantially increased by the proposed addition. As described in Finding of Fact No. 15, the use is not likely to create an increase in existing traffic congestion. There is public parking nearby as described in Finding of Fact No. 16, to supplement the on-site parking provided by the applicant. The site is well served by public transportation as set forth in Findings of Fact No. 13. The Board concludes that because of the size and configuration of the lot, full compliance with the parking requirements would be unduly restrictive and unreasonable.

The Board further concludes that the special exception relief can be granted as in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Map and will not tend to adversely affect the use of neighboring property in accordance with said Zoning Regulations and Map. Accordingly it is ORDERED that the application is GRANTED.

VOTE: 4-0 (William F. McIntosh, Paula L. Jewell, Charles R. Norris, and Carrie L. Thornhill to grant;
Maybelle T. Bennett not present, not voting).

BY ORDER OF THE D.C. BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

ATTESTED BY:


EDWARD L. CURRY
Acting Executive Director

JAN 30 1987

FINAL DATE OF ORDER: _____

UNDER SUB-SECTION 8204.3 OF THE ZONING REGULATIONS, "NO DECISION OR ORDER OF THE BOARD SHALL TAKE EFFECT UNTIL TEN DAYS AFTER HAVING BECOME FINAL PURSUANT TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL RULES OF PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE BEFORE THE BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT."

THIS ORDER OF THE BOARD IS VALID FOR A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS ORDER, UNLESS WITHIN SUCH PERIOD AN APPLICATION FOR A BUILDING PERMIT OR CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY IS FILED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS.

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